Sleeping Beauty

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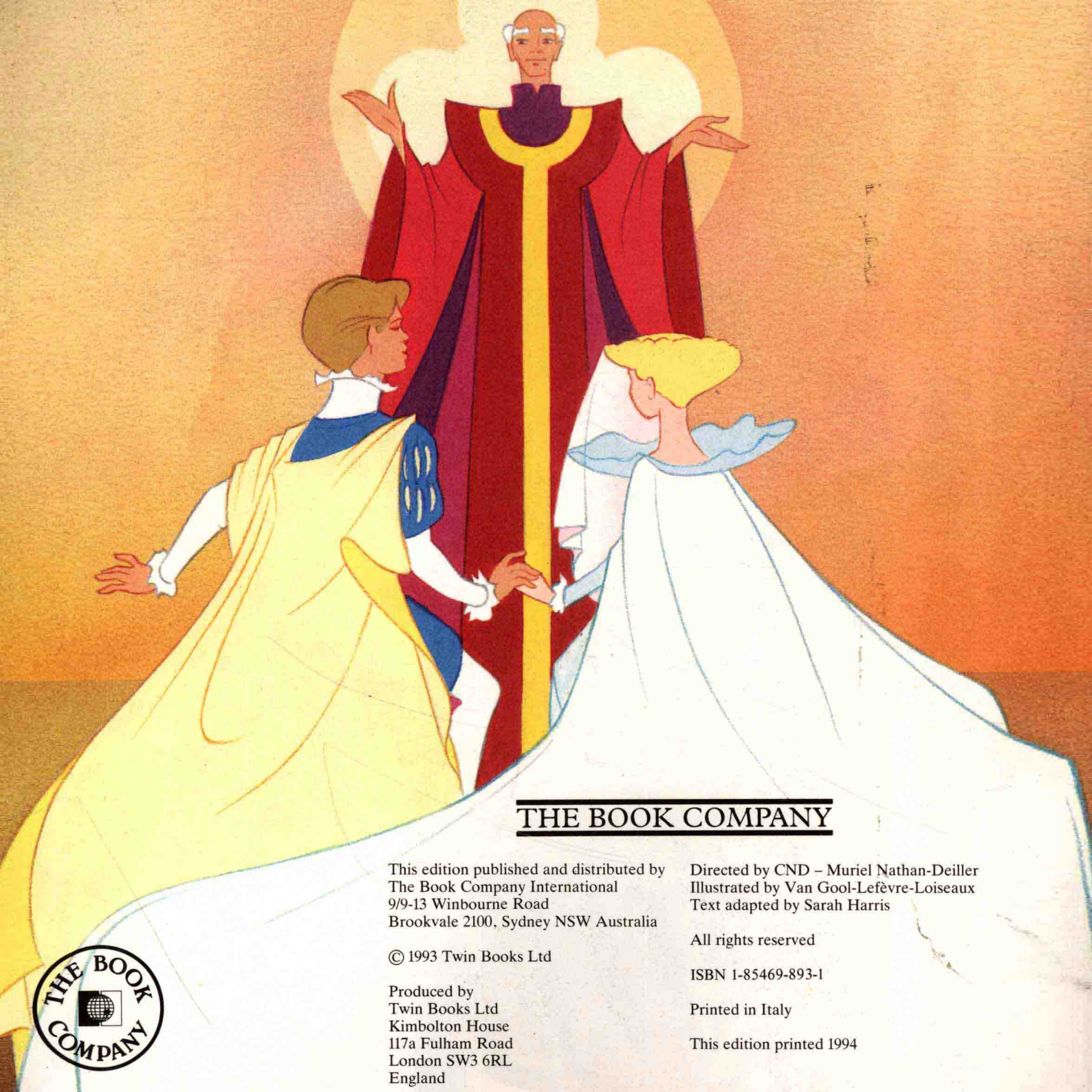

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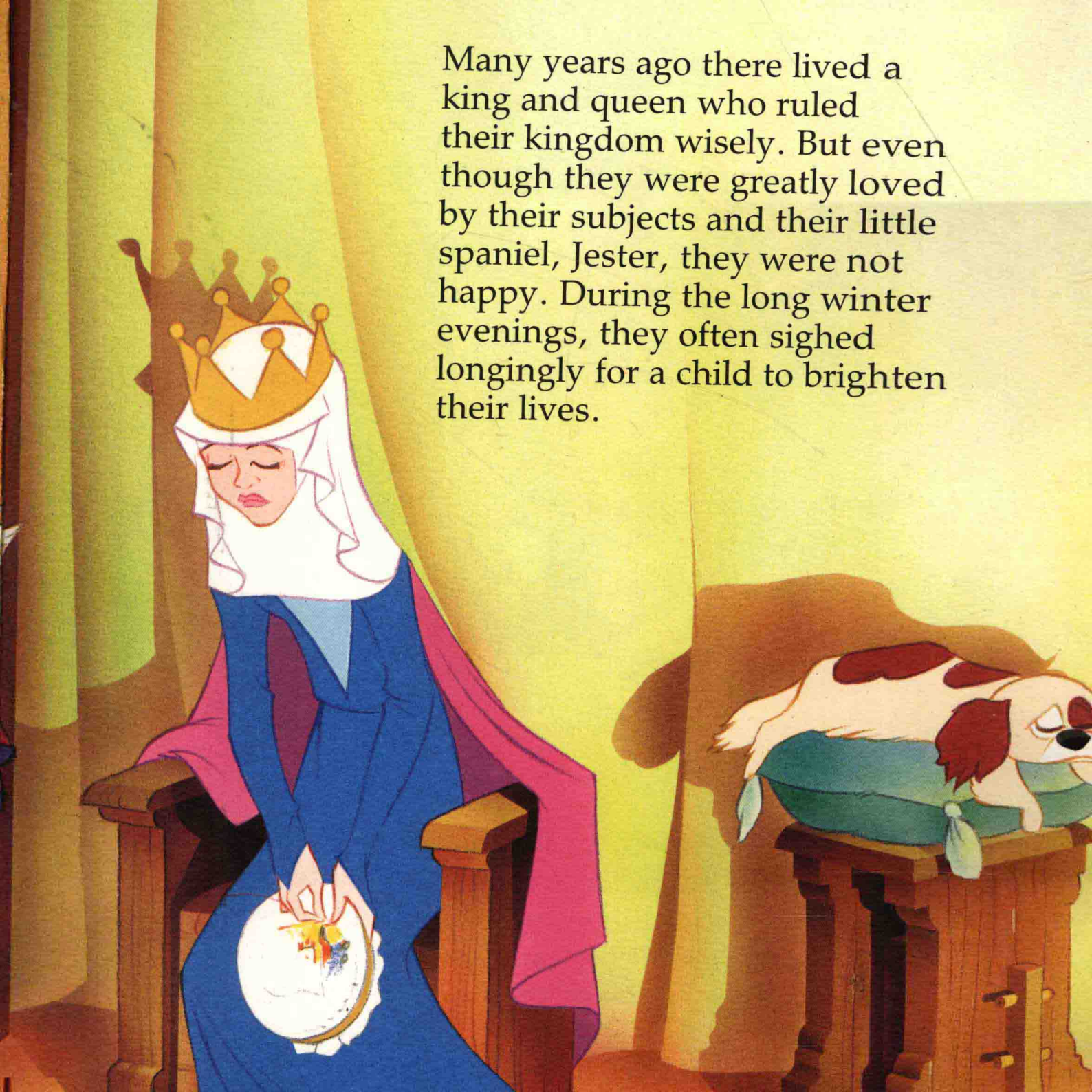
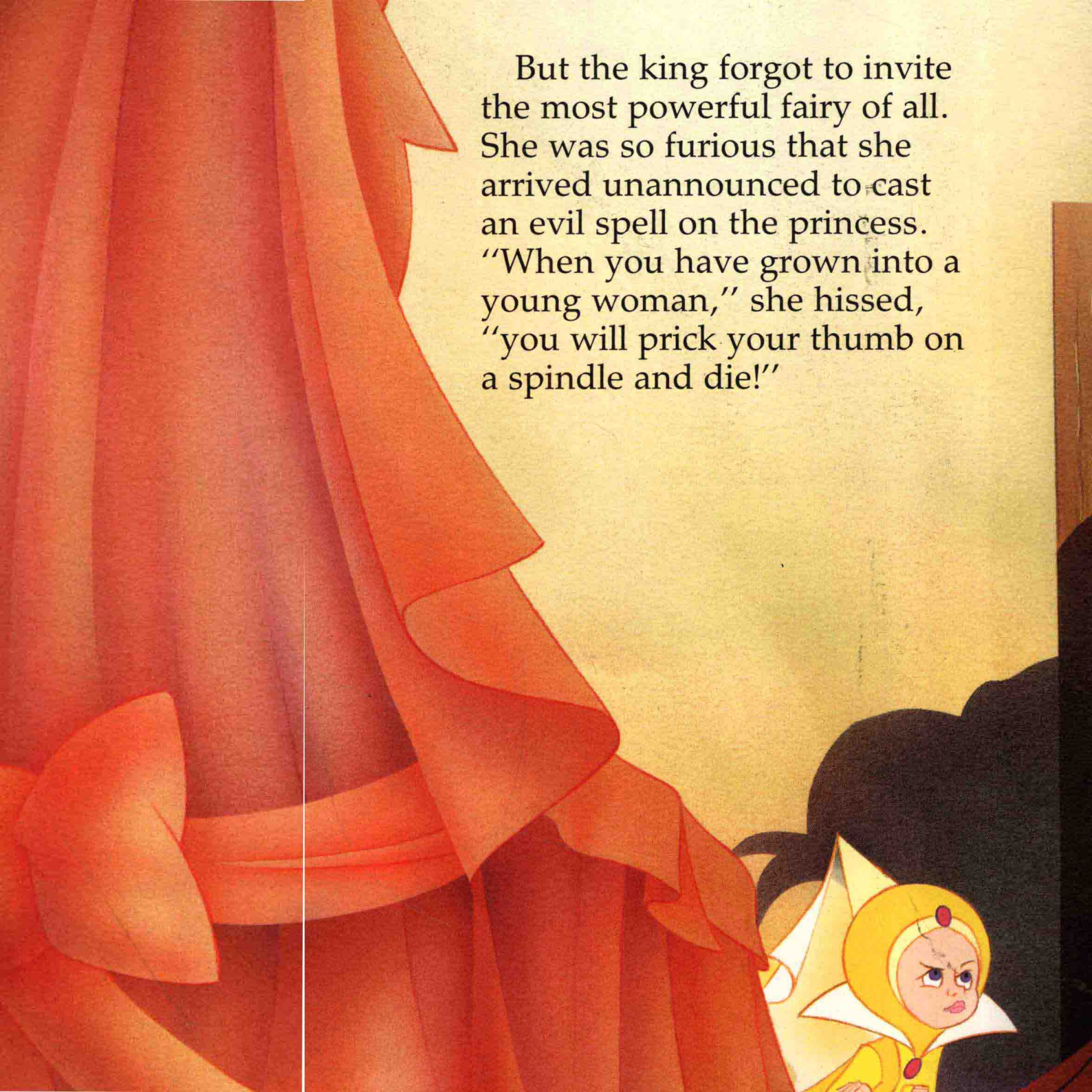
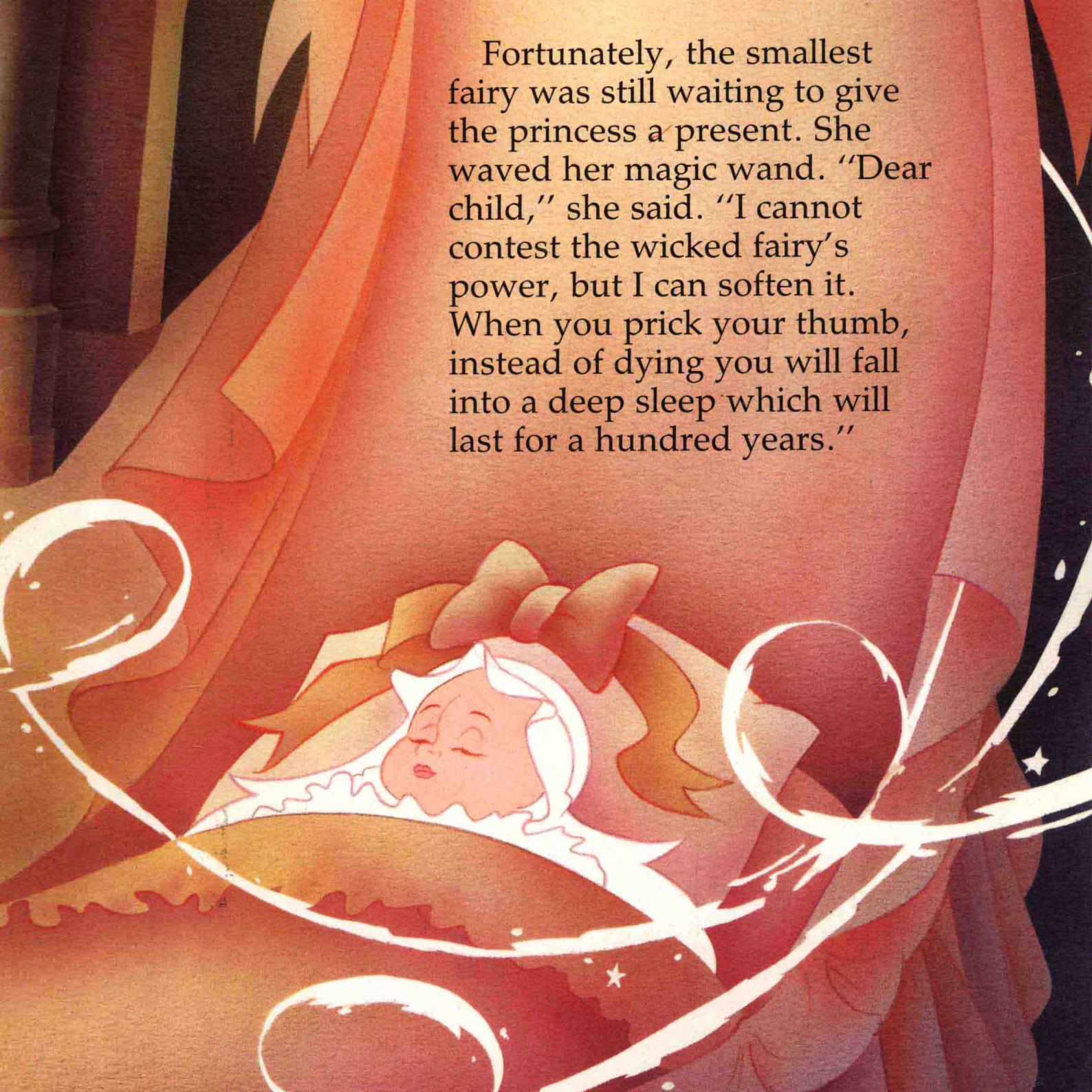


Many years ago there lived a king and queen who ruled their kingdom wisely. But even though they were greatly loved by their subjects and their little spaniel, Jester, they were not happy. During the long winter evenings, they often sighed longingly for a child to brighten their lives.

One day their wish came true. To celebrate the birth of their baby daughter, the king and queen held a banquet to which all the fairies in the land were invited. One by one they gave gifts to the little princess.



But the king forgot to invite the most powerful fairy of all. She was so furious that she arrived unannounced to cast an evil spell on the princess. "When you have grown into a young woman," she hissed, "you will prick your thumb on a spindle and die!"

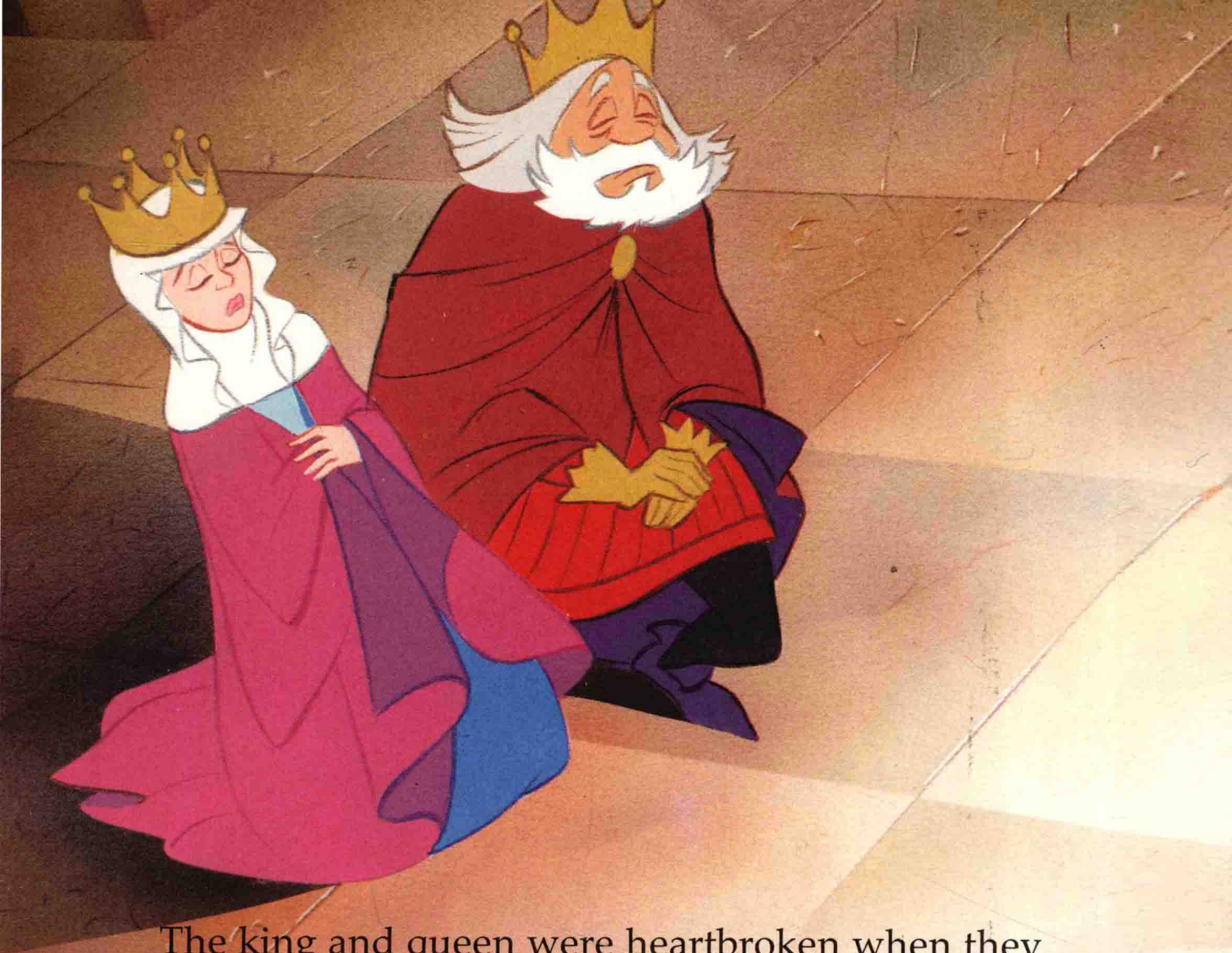


Fortunately, the smallest fairy was still waiting to give the princess a present. She waved her magic wand. "Dear child," she said. "I cannot contest the wicked fairy's power, but I can soften it. When you prick your thumb, instead of dying you will fall into a deep sleep which will last for a hundred years."

The years passed, and the princess grew into a beautiful and gentle woman, admired by all.

One day, while exploring the castle, she discovered a dark and eerie turret. Together with Jester, she climbed the tower, and entered the room at the top of the stairs.

The wicked fairy sat at a spinning wheel. "Come closer, child," she cackled, "and I'll teach you to spin." Unsuspecting – for she did not know about the evil spell – the princess took the spindle; the sharp point pricked her thumb, and she fell into a deep, deep sleep.

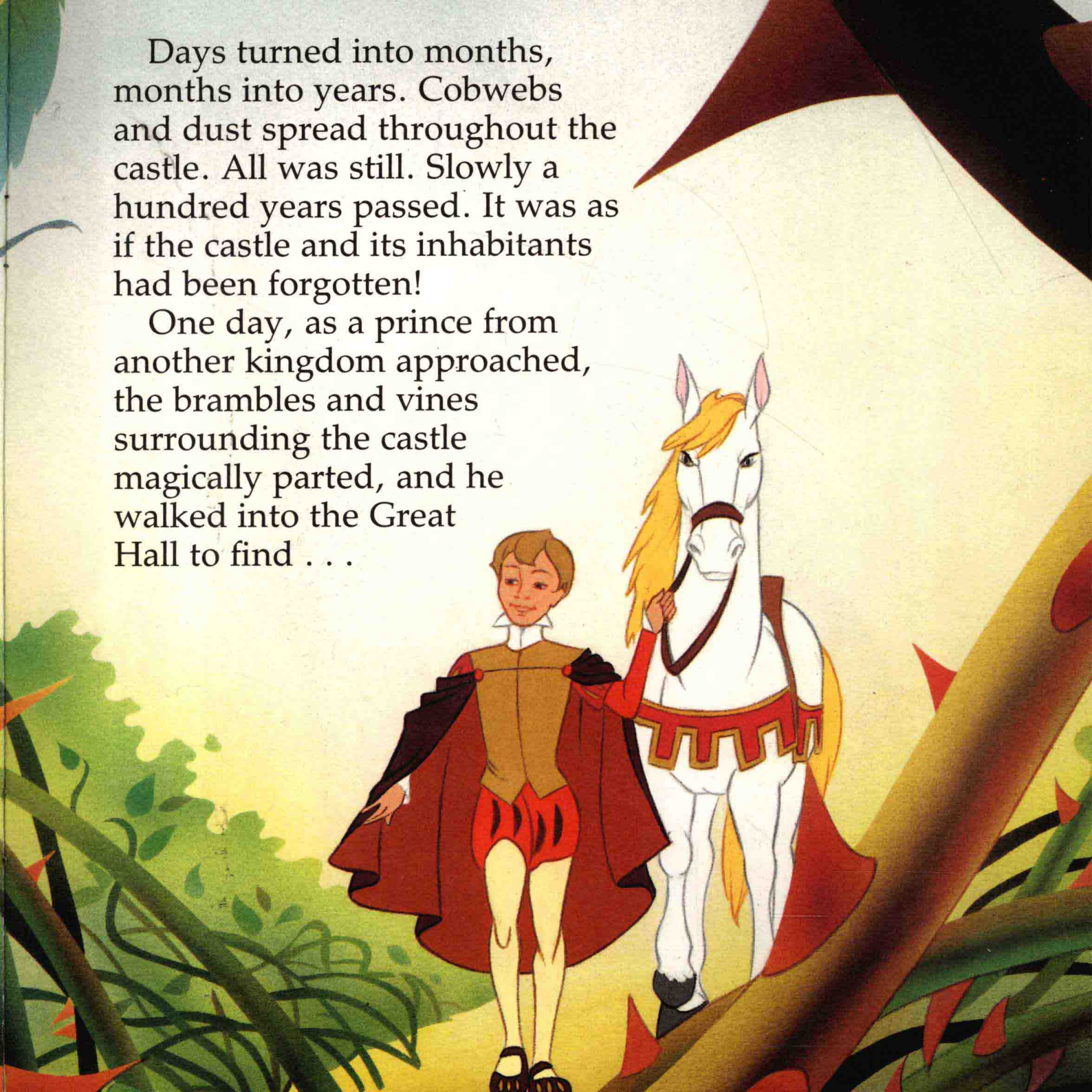


The king and queen were heartbroken when they found their daughter. They had been unable to protect her! The princess would now sleep for a hundred years, by which time they would be long dead! In despair, the queen sent for the smallest fairy.

In a twinkling, the fairy froze the whole castle in time; the cooks at the hearth, the maids with their sewing, the butler in his pantry, the sentries on duty . . . . No one would grow a moment older!

Days turned into months, months into years. Cobwebs and dust spread throughout the castle. All was still. Slowly a hundred years passed. It was as if the castle and its inhabitants had been forgotten!

One day, as a prince from another kingdom approached, the brambles and vines surrounding the castle magically parted, and he walked into the Great Hall to find . . .



. . . a sleeping beauty. What would wake her? He knelt sadly by her bed, then leaned over and gently kissed her. The princess's eyes fluttered open, and met those of her prince! He had broken the enchanted spell!

Slowly the whole castle came back to life. There was a great flurry of activity when the king and queen happily announced their daughter's forthcoming wedding.

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